

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 033066

RMO. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SREF, CB

SUBJECT: KHMER EMBASSY EFFORTS TO PUBLICIZE PLIGHT OF KHMER
WAR VICTIMS

REF: STATE 26761 (NOTAL)

WASHINGTON POST FEBRUARY 13 RAN UM SIM LETTER (REFTEL).
HOWEVER, APPARENTLY GOADED BY SIM'S REMARKS AS WELL AS
PRESS REPORTS OF THE SHELLING OF CAMBODIA, POST ALSO PRINTED
FOLLOWING EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 19:

BEGIN QUOTE. LAST MONDAY, INSURGENTS IN CAMBODIA, OR THEIR
NORTH VIETNAMESE ADVISERS, PARKED A CAPTURED AMERICAN-MADE
105MM HOWITZER OUTSIDE PHNOM PENH AND COOLLY CRANKED 55
SHELLS INTO THE BUSTLING CITY, KILLING SOME 500 CAMBODIAN
CIVILIANS AND BURNING OUT PERHAPS 1,000 HOMES. IT WAS THE
MOST RECENT AND SAVAGE EFFORT OF THE ATTACKERS TO TERRORIZE
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AND DEMORALIZE THE POPULATION AND BRING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT
OF LON NOL. TERROR IS THE TACTIC INCREASINGLY BEING CHOSEN
BY THE INSURGENTS IN THE ABSENCE OF A STRAIGHT-OUT MILITARY
CAPABILITY. BUT DESPITE THEIR POST-ATTACK BOAST THAT

'PHNOM PENH IS IN CHAOS,' THE TACTIC DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE WORKING. CORRESPONDENTS REPORT A HARSH POPULAR REACTION AGAINST THE ATTACKERS. AND ELSEWHERE IN CAMBODIA, THE LON NOL FORCES SEEM TO BE AT LEAST HOLDING THEIR OWN. SUPPLIES NOW GO UP THE ONCE-CLOSED MEKONG RIVER, FOR INSTANCE,

WITHOUT INCIDENT. HEAVY GOVERNMENT CASUALTIES ATTEST TO THE ARMY'S READINESS TO FIGHT.

IS THERE NOW WITHIN REACH THE KIND OF MILITARY STALEMATE THAT COULD BECOME THE BASIS OF A CEASEFIRE AND A POLITICAL NEGOTIATION? THAT THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT IS EAGER FOR SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, WHATEVER ITS INTERNAL DIFFERENCES ON OTHER ISSUES, IS BEYOND CAVIL. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE INSURGENT KHMER ROUGE? OFF AND ON, THEY SEEM TO BE SHORT OF SUPPLIES. THIS IS PERHAPS A RESULT OF HANOI'S RELUCTANCE TO HELP BRING TO POWER IN PHNOM PENH A GROUP OF CAMBODIANS LEANING TOWARD PEKING --THEIR NOMINAL LEADER, PRINCE SI-HANOUK, LIVES THERE. INTRIGUINGLY, THE KHMER ROUGE COMPLAIN THAT THE GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO 'DIVIDE' THEM WITH ITS CEASEFIRE AND NEGOTIATION OFFERS -- A STRONG HINT THAT SOME OF THE INSURGENTS ARE TEMPTED TO GO THAT ROUTE. HISTORICALLY, CAMBODIANS FEAR THEIR NEIGHBORS, THE VIETNAMESE (AND THE THAIS), AND EVIDENTLY MANY CAMBODIANS NOW BLAME HANOI AND THE VIETCONG FOR THEIR COUNTRY'S TRAVAIL. THE RAINS COME IN MAY. THIS TURN IN THE WEATHER CUSTOMARILY MARKS A BREAK IN THE FIGHTING AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR POLITICAL INITIATIVE.

NOW IS THE MOMENT FOR THE UNITED STATES TO MOUNT A FRESH AND STRONG EFFORT TO BRING ABOUT WHAT BOTH SIDES IN CAMBODIA SAY THEY WANT: THE END OF FOREIGN MILITARY AID AND INTERVENTION. SUCH AN EFFORT WOULD AIM AT SECURING SOVIET CHINESE AND NORTH VIETNAMESE ACQUIESCENCE FOR NEUTRALIZING CAMBODIA AND FOR FORMALLY GUARANTEEING ITS TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. THE FATE OF THAT STRETCH OF CAMBODIA WHICH HANOI USES FOR ITS MILITARY PURPOSES IN SOUTH VIETNAM WOULD HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BE SET ASIDE FOR LATER CONSIDERATION. BUT THE WAR IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY, IN THE PARTS WHERE MOST OF THE PEOPLE LIVE, COULD END. WHETHER THE RIVALS IN CAMBODIA ARE STRONG ENOUGH TO NEGOTIATE WITH OTHER, OR TO SORT THEMSELVES OUT SEPARATELY WITHOUT NEGOTIATION, IS FAR FROM CLEAR. THE WAY TO FIND OUT IS FOR THE OUTSIDERS TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS WHERE THE CAMBODIANS CAN, IF THEY CHOOSE, TRY.

A FEELING OF FATALISM AND INERTIA OFTEN SEEMS TO GRIP THE UNITED STATES AS IT CONTEMPLATES CAMBODIA. OFTEN IT IS SAID WITH A SHRUG, FOR INSTANCE, THAT NOTHING CAN BE DONE IN CAMBODIA UNTIL SOMETHING IS DONE IN VIETNAM. BECAUSE

NO AMERICANS ARE FIGHTING OR BEING KILLED IN CAMBODIA, MOREOVER AND BECAUSE AMERICAN PRESTIGE IS NOT ENGAGED TO NEARLY THE SAME EXTENT THAT IT IS IN SAIGON, LESS AMERICAN ATTENTION IS FOCUSED THERE. BUT, IN FACT, THE WAR GOES ON IN PART BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES LET IT GO ON.

FATALISM IN WASHINGTON MEANS FATALITIES IN CAMBODIA. THE SPELL MUST BE CAST OFF. THIS IS, FIRST OF ALL, THE ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSIBILITY. CONGRESS CAN DO ITS DUTY BY INSISTING ON A SERIOUS DIPLOMATIC ATTEMPT TO END THE WAR AS A CONDITION OF APPROVING FURTHER AID. END QUOTE.

2. BELIEVE THAT EDITORIAL WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ITS MISCHIEVOUS CONCLUSION IS USEFUL. EITHER UM SIM OR OURSELVES WILL TAKE OCCASION OF NEXT CHAT WITH EDITORIAL WRITER ROSENFELD TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON KHMER WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE BUT NOT TO CAPITULATE.

3. UM SIM HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN HIS EFFORTS TO DRUM UP SOME SYMPATHY FOR HIS PEOPLE. ON FEBRUARY 19, SIM CALLED UPON KENNEDY SUBCOMMITTEE STAFFERS DEHAAN AND TINKER TO TRY TO GET THE REFUGEE SUBCOMMITTEE TO FOCUS NOT ONLY ON THE SHELLING VICTIMS BUT ON THE EFFORTS OF THE GKR IN THE PROVINCES. WE GAVE UM SIM LATEST DATA ON THE FANK OPERATION IN KOMPONG THOM IN ORDER TO UNDERSCORE KHMER EAGERNESS TO ESCAPE COMMUNIST CONTROL. DEHAAN WAS AT FIRST LESS THAN WARM IN HIS REACTION, CLAIMING THAT THERE WAS LITTLE UTILITY IN SENDING INVESTIGATORS TO CAMBODIA BE-
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CAUSE AMERICANS WERE PREOCCUPIED WITH OTHER PROBLEMS. DEHAAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE WAS A COMMITTEE INVESTIGATOR IN LAOS WHO COULD GO BUT PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE DISPATCHED BECAUSE OF THE PHYSICAL DANGER IN PHNOM PENH.

4. UM SIM WAS INFORMED FEBRUARY 20 THAT DEHAAN APPARENTLY REVERSED HIS POSITION FOLLOWING THEIR MEETING BECAUSE SENATOR KENNEDY MADE A STATEMENT ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE FEBRUARY 20 DEPLORING THE SHELLING AND CALLING UPON THE ADMINISTRATION TO DO MORE FOR THE KHMER REFUGEES. TEXT WILL BE TRANSMITTED BY SEPTEL. DEHAAN, THROUGH TINKER (KENNEDY AND DEHAAN HAVE LEFT FOR GENEVA) HAS ASKED UM SIM TO WRITE TO KENNEDY TO REMIND HIM TO SEND A COMMITTEE STAFF MEMBER TO INVESTIGATE THE SHELLING OF KOMPONG THOM REFUGEE MOVEMENT.

5. UM SIM INTENDS TO ALSO CABLE GENEVA, SUGGESTING TO THE KHMER DELEGATION AT THE CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF WAR THAT THE GKR MAKE A STRONG STATEMENT BEFORE THE CONFERENCE CONDEMNING COMMUNIST TERRORISM AND WORLD INDIFFERENCE.

6. UM SIM INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO APPROACH PERSONALITIES ON CAPITOL HILL, MAKING THE SAME PITCH THAT HE MADE TO UNITED FEATURE SYNDICATE WRITER, JOHN LOFTON, WHO WROTE FOLLOWING ARTICLE FOR TV GUIDE MAGAZINE. BEGIN TEXT.

QUOTE BELL TOLLS FOR CAMBODIA UNQUOTE. UM SIM WONDERS WHY ALL THE PEACE PEOPLE AND SO-CALLED ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATORS ARE SO SILENT.

WHEN HE SAW JANE FONDA AND HER HUSBAND, TOM HAYDEN, RECENTLY ON LOCAL TV HERE DUCKING A QUESTION ABOUT NORTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS IN CAMBODIA, HE WAS SO UPSET HE CALLED THE STATION TO REQUEST THAT THE QUESTION BE ASKED AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL IT WAS ANSWERED.

YOU SEE, MR. SIM FEELS SO STRONGLY ABOUT THE SUBJECT BECAUSE HE IS THE HONORABLE UM SIM, AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES FROM THE KHMER REPUBLIC - CAMBODIA.

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AND WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON IN HIS COUNTRY FOR YEARS NOW HAS BEEN A CAMPAIGN OF COLOSSAL CARNAGE AND TERROR AGAINST HIS PEOPLE, A CAMPAIGN CONDUCTED BY COMMUNIST-LED INSURGENTS. THE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION AGAINST INNOCENT CIVILIANS -- MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN -- REACHED A DEVASTATING CLIMAX JUST A FEW DAYS AGO.

ON FEBRUARY 12, ACCORDING TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, GUNNERS POURED 73 ROUNDS OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE SHELLS AND 122MM SOVIET-MADE ROCKETS INTO A DENSELY POPULATED MARKET AND SLUM AREA IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE CAPITAL CITY OF PHNOM PENH. OVER 150 PEOPLE WERE KILLED -- 'ALMOST ALL CIVILIANS, AND MANY OF THEM WOMEN OR CHILDREN' -- HUNDREDS WOUNDED, AND AN ESTIMATED 10,000 LEFT HOMELESS.

THE WASHINGTON POST'S MAN-ON-THE-SCENE, PHILIP MCCOMBS, REPORTED THAT 'AS AN ACT OF TERROR AGAINST CIVILIANS, DESIGNED TO SHAKE THE ALREADY STRAINED CAPACITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT, THE SHELLING HAS HAD GREAT EFFECT.'

AMID 10 ACRES OF BURNED-OUT HOUSING AROUND THE SHELLED MARKETPLACE, THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WERE SWARMING IN SEARCH OF THEIR DEAD, HE WROTE. IN ONE CROWDED AREA, A BONFIRE WAS BURNING AND A 36-YEAR OLD LABORER NAMED UN HUON WAS PICKING UP CHUNKS OF HIS WIFE'S BODY AND THROWING THEM ON THE FIRE.

'I CAN'T FIND ALL HER BODY,' HE DECLARED. 'I CAN FIND ONLY HALF OF HER. I AM A BUDDHIST AND I HAVE TO BURN THE BODY AFTER SHE DIED.' ENTIRE FAMILIES DIED IN THE RUBBLE. 'ALL MY FAMILY HAS DISAPPEARED,' THE AP QUOTES

40-YEAR-OLD MRS. KUY SUNG AS SAYING. 'I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO FIND THEM. I HAVE EIGHT CHILDREN. MY HUSBAND HAS GONE ALSO. I HAVE NOTHING LEFT, ONLY THE CLOTHES ON MY BODY.'

FEBRUARY 14 WAS NOT A HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY FOR AMBASSADOR SIM. WHEN I SPOKE WITH HIM HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD HOW WITH OUR OWN PROBLEMS OF ENERGY AND THE ECONOMY, IT WAS HARD TO SHOW MUCH INTEREST IN WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN HIS COUNTRY 10,000 MILES AWAY. "BUT THIS IS NOT VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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GOOD FOR US,' HE DECLARED, SAYING THAT SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

'I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THERE ARE NO PEOPLE AT LEAST DEMONSTRATING AGAINST THE KILLING OF INNOCENT CAMBODIAN CIVILIANS,' HE SAYS, 'OR PERHAPS SOMEONE TRYING TO RAISE SOME RELIEF HELP EITHER SYMBOLIC OR SUBSTANTIAL.'

IN THE PAST, THE AMBASSADOR NOTES, WHEN THERE HAVE BEEN NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS HURRICANES, THERE USUALLY ARE FOUR OR FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS FORTHCOMING, 'WHICH IS NOT A LOT FOR YOU, BUT MEANS A LOT TO US.'

HOWEVER, DURING THE PAST MONTH, WHEN THE KILLING AND MAIMING OF HIS PEOPLE GREATLY INCREASED, THERE HAS BEEN NOT ONE PEACE OR ANTI-WAR GROUP OFFERING HELP OF ANY KIND, HE SAYS SADLY. THE ONLY CALL WAS FROM A YOUNG GIRL AT AN AREA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND SHE NEVER CALLED BACK.

'IF YOU ARE GOING TO WRITE AN ARTICLE, I WOULD APPRECIATE IT VERY MUCH IF YOU WOULD CONVEY THE MESSAGE TO THESE PEOPLE TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP RELIEVE THE INNOCENT VICTIMS WHO ARE SUFFERING IN THIS WAR,' THE AMBASSADOR REQUESTED.

ONE OF THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF THE COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN CAMBODIA PUT IT ANOTHER WAY IN THE MCCOMB STORY IN THE WASHINGTON POST. BUT THE MESSAGE WAS THE SAME" 'I WANT TO APPEAL TO RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD,' HE SAID, 'AND LET THEM KNOW THAT THE WATER IS NOW UP NEAR OUR NOSES, AND GETTING HIGHER.'

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO TO HELP LOWER THE WATER, WRITE AMBASSADOR SIM CARE OF THE CAMBODIAN EMBASSY, 4500 16TH ST., N.W., WASHINGTON DC 20011 OR CALL 202-726-2404. KISSINGER

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